

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2003

**HEARING ON PROPOSED SUPREME COURT RULE TO FOR
MANDATORY CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION**

The Rules Committee of the Illinois Supreme Court will hear comments at a public hearing Monday on a proposal mandating that Illinois attorneys attend a minimum number of hours of legal education courses.

The Committee, which also will hear comments on several other proposals relating to the practice of law and the regulation of the legal profession in Illinois, will hold the public hearing Monday, January 27 at 10 a.m. at 160 N. LaSalle Street, Room C-500, in Chicago.

Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride is the Court's liaison to the Committee. Chicago attorney Patricia C. Bobb is its chairperson.

The Continuing Legal Education (CLE) proposal was offered by the Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association.

The proposal would establish a CLE Board, consisting of nine members appointed by the Supreme Court, to oversee the program.

It would require Illinois attorneys to complete 20 hours of CLE activity during the initial two-year period following adoption of the rules; 24 hours of CLE activity during the next two-year period and 30 hours of CLE activity during every two-year period afterwards.

It also would require newly admitted Illinois attorneys to complete a Basic Skills Course, totaling at least 15 hours of instruction on subjects ranging from local court rules and filing requirements, client communications, required record keeping and other basic elements of practice.

The Committee also will hear comments on another proposal supported by the two bar associations. That proposal deals with establishing a limited liability legal practice, eliminating

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**Rules Committee Meeting
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vicarious liability for legal malpractice claims. It would amend Supreme Court Rule 721 and propose a new rule, Rule 722.

A proposed amendment to Canon 3, of the Code of Judicial Conduct, Supreme Court Rule 63, would clarify that a judge's acts as a mentor of a new judge under the formal mentoring program established by the Supreme Court in 1998 are absolutely privileged as part of a judge's judicial duties. It would also require that information obtained by the mentoring judge during the formal mentoring program pertaining to a new judge's performance be held in confidence by the mentor.

Other proposals would allow for originals, copies or computer-generated images of records a lawyer is required to keep about the status of clients and the financial records of his practice; and establish new Rule 402A on probation proceedings in accordance with what the Supreme Court expressed in *People v. Hall*, a decision handed down Nov. 21, 2001.

All the proposals are posted on the Supreme Court's website at www.state.il.us/court. To view the proposals select "Supreme Court of Illinois" and then select "Supreme Court Committees/Commissions." The proposals are under the subsection titled "Public Hearings."

None of the proposals would take effect unless specifically approved by the Illinois Supreme Court.

Notice of the hearing, accompanied by copies of the proposed rules changes, have been distributed to members of the bench and bar throughout the state.

The public hearing on proposals regarding rules governing the administration of the state's judicial system is held annually on the fourth Monday in January.